

IDW® TRANSFORMERS

COMBINER HUNTERS

MAIRGHREAD SCOTT
SARA
PITRE-DUROCHER
YAMAISHI



CWC
2015

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YAMAISHI



SEA OF RUST

IN JUST 5 HOURS

PAN CYBERTRONIAN SPACEWAYS

THE GALAXY'S MOST EXPERIENCED FASTER THAN LIGHT SPACELINE

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COMBINER HUNTERS

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GRRH!

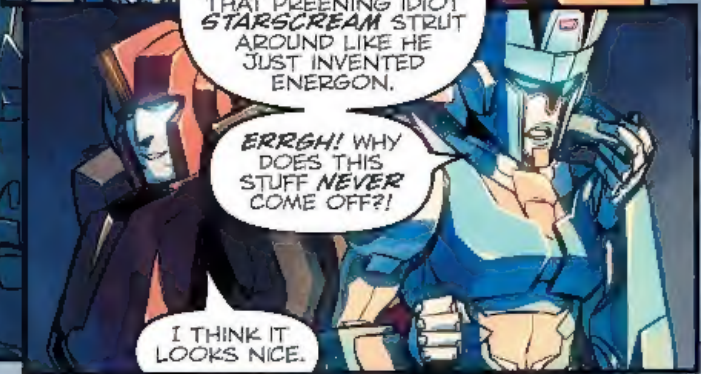


CHROMIA!
FINALLY!

HEY, WHAT'S
WITH THE
CITYSPEAKER
FACE-PAINT?



THE MISTRESS
OF FLAME DECLARED
IT AN OFFICIAL HOLIDAY
TO CELEBRATE THE
UNIFICATION AGREEMENT
BETWEEN CAMINUS
AND CYBERTRON.



NOT ONLY DID
I HAVE TO PUT ON
FULL DRESS MAKEUP,
I HAD TO WATCH
THAT PREENING IDIOT
STARSCREAM STRUT
AROUND LIKE HE
JUST INVENTED
ENERGON.

ERRGH! WHY
DOES THIS
STUFF NEVER
COME OFF?!

I THINK IT
LOOKS NICE.



SHUT
UP!

SORRY...
WINDBLADE'S THE
ONLY ONE WHO CAN
ACTUALLY PULL OFF
THIS SCRAP.



WELL, I'M OFF TO
MACCARAM'S.

HAVE FUN MAKING
SURE GIGGLES
OVER THERE DOESN'T
STEAL THE ENIGMA
AND START AN
INTERPLANETARY
WAR OR NOTHIN'.

LAST THING
WE NEED IS
SOMEBODY
MAKIN' MORE
COMBINERS
WITH IT.

YEAH, YEAH.
DON'T TRUST
ANYONE... BLAH,
BLAH, BLAH.



YOU GOT
THOUGHTS
ABOUT MY
SITTING-
BOX?

NO. THE
CHOSEN ONE
TOLD ME TO
STAND AT
ATTENTION.

THEN EYES
FORWARD,
BADGELESS.

LET'S JUST
GET THROUGH
THE NEXT EIGHT
HOURS IN PEACE
AND QUIET.

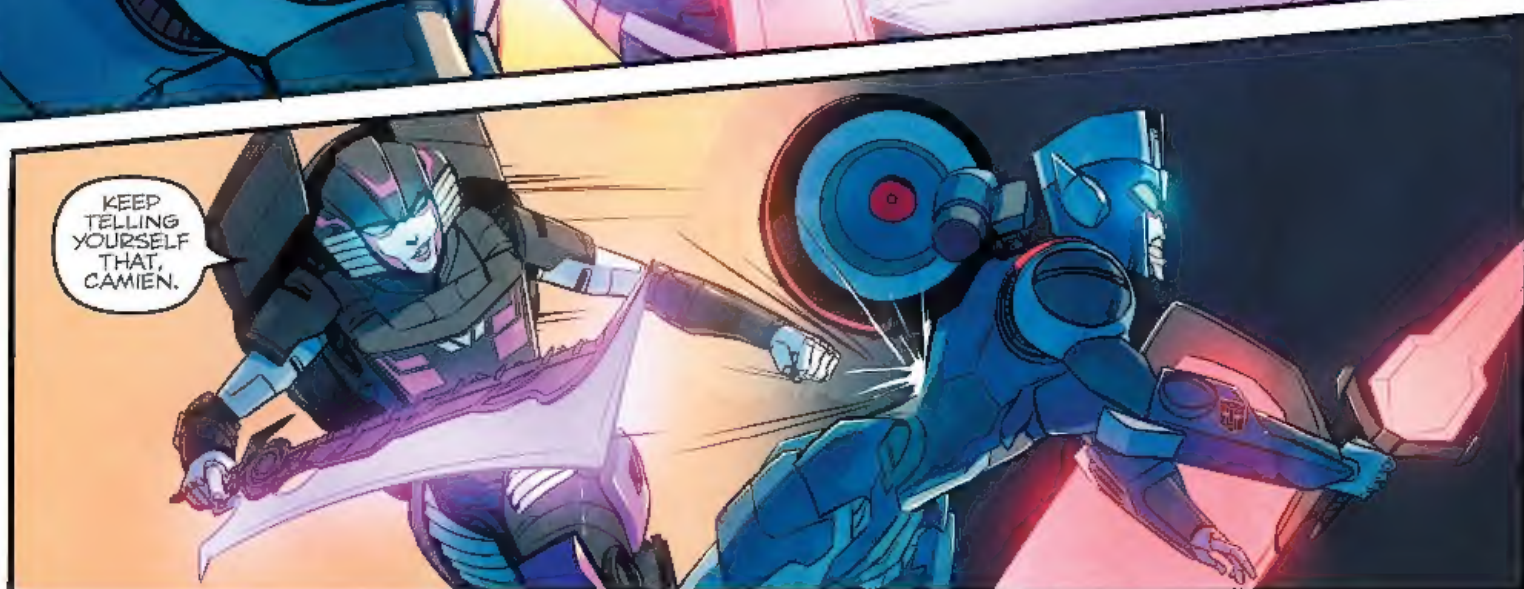
URRGH!

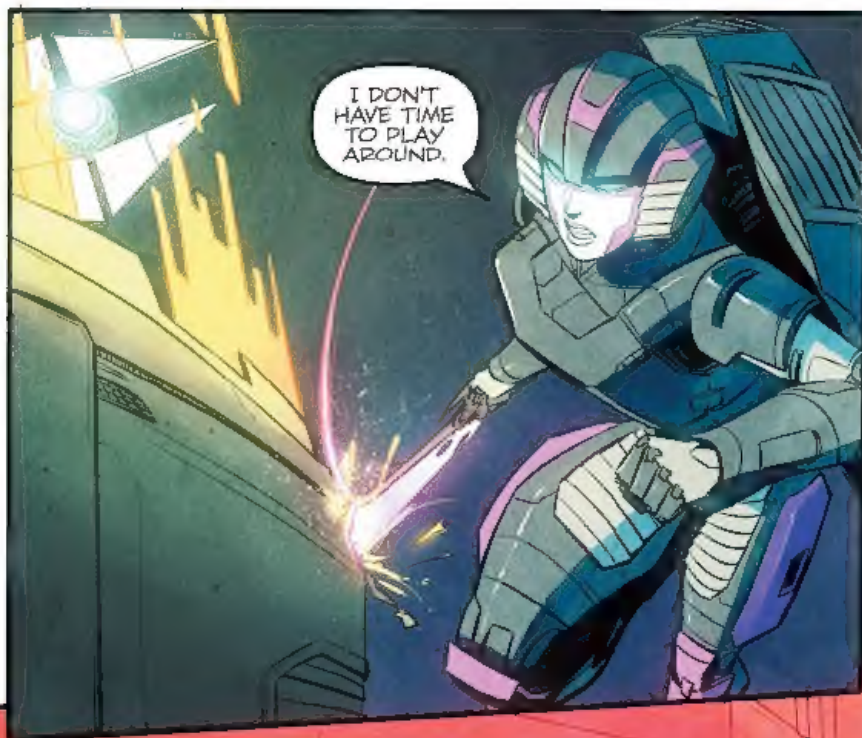
I COULDN'T
AGREE MORE.
LET'S KEEP
THIS PEACEFUL,
CHROMIA.

I'M JUST
HERE FOR THE
ENIGMA OF
COMBINATION.

...UGHHH...

An Uneventful Night





I DON'T
HAVE TIME
TO PLAY
AROUND.



STOP!



RAH!

FEEL FREE
TO GIVE UP
ANY TIME.



WINDBLADE!
ARCEE'S
MAKING OFF
WITH THE
ENIGMA.



WHAT?!

I'M IN
PURSUIT!

DON'T CALL
ANYONE ELSE.
I'M ON MY
WAY!







MA'AM,
DO YOU
SEE
THAT?

NO ONE'S
COME OUT
TO THE RUINS
BEFORE. WHERE
ARE THEY
HEADED?

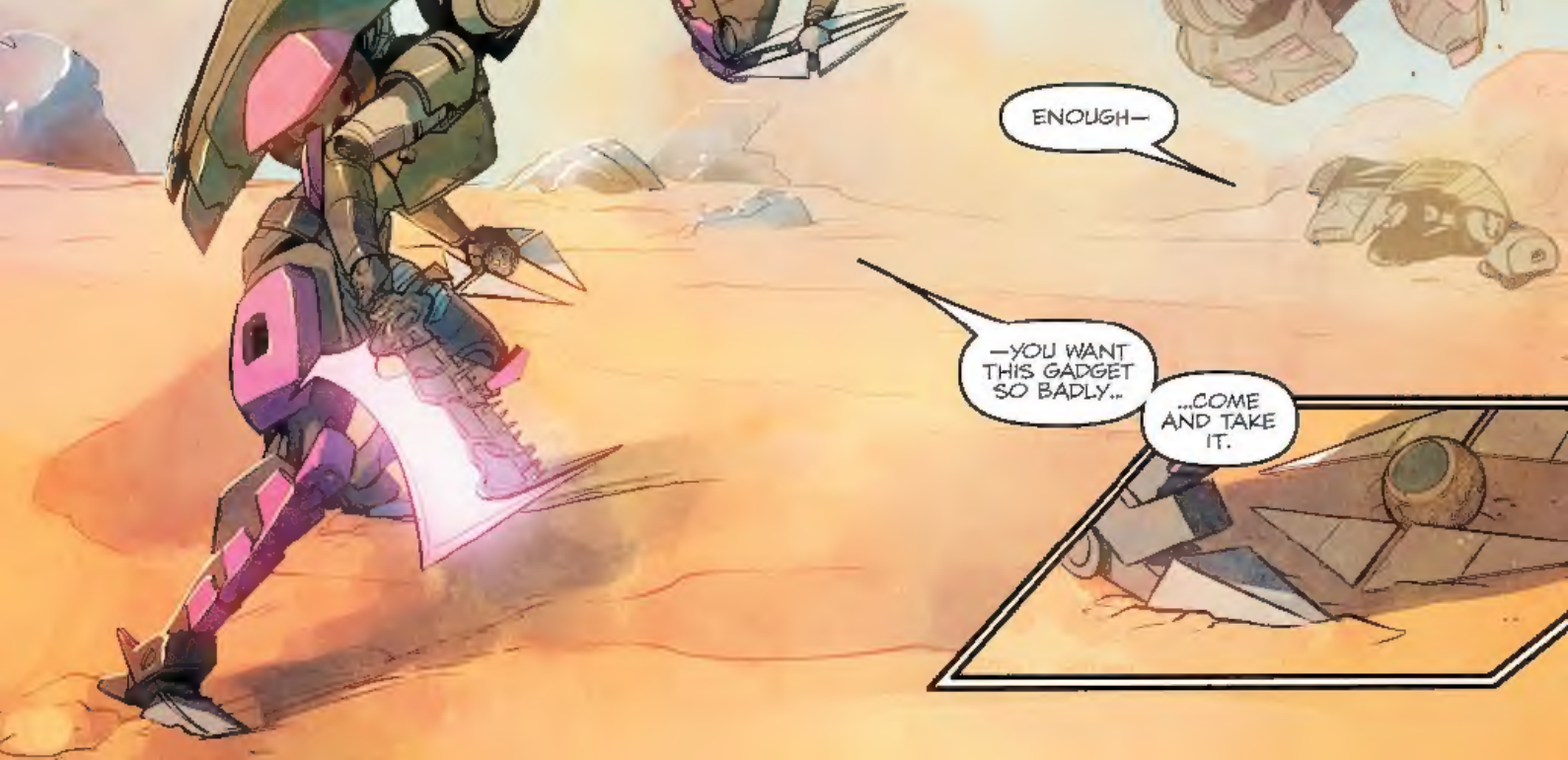


SAY IT...
SAY IT...

OKAY,
TORCHBEARERS!

LET'S
LIGHT THE
WAY!

YES!
ADVENTURE!



ENOUGH—

—YOU WANT
THIS GADGET
SO BADLY...

...COME
AND TAKE
IT.



GIVE US THE
ENGMA AND IT'S
OVER, ARCEE!

OH, IS
THAT
ALL?

HERE I THOUGHT
WE WERE JUST
GETTING
URK--STARTED!

I WON'T
ASK AGAIN--
URK!

NO! YOU
WON'T!

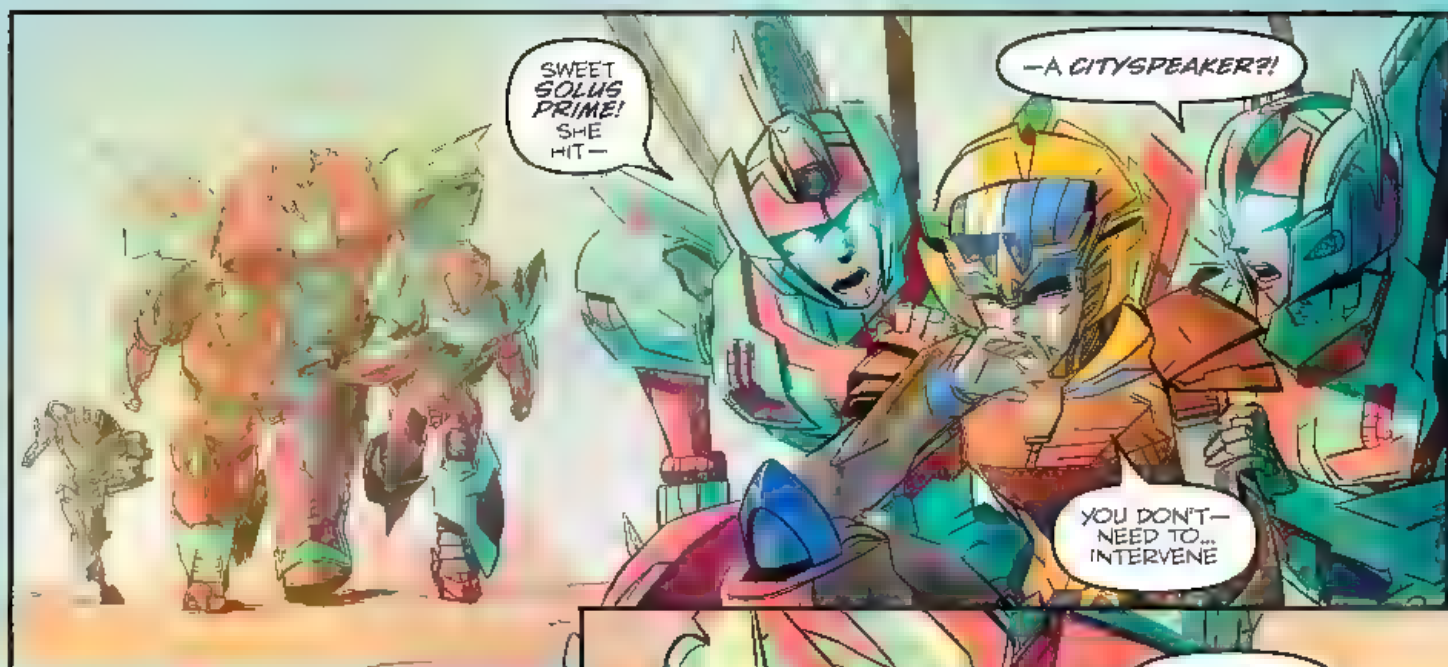
WE'RE
TALKING NOW
AREN'T WE?

GRAH!

WHAT DO
YOU HAVE
TO SAY,
CHROMA?

ARE YOU WILLING
TO DIE FOR
STARSCREAM,
TOO?!

FOR THIS
THING?!





I DON'T HAVE TO RUN.

I CAME HERE TO TAKE THIS HUNK OF JUNK OUT OF STARScream's GRASP.

DESTROYING IT DOES THE JOB JUST AS WELL.



No!

STOP! I WON'T RISK A CITYsPEAKER'S LIFE FOR SOME TRINKET.



EVEN THE TRINKET OF A PRIME?

I THOUGHT YOU CAMIENS WORSHIPPED PRIMES.

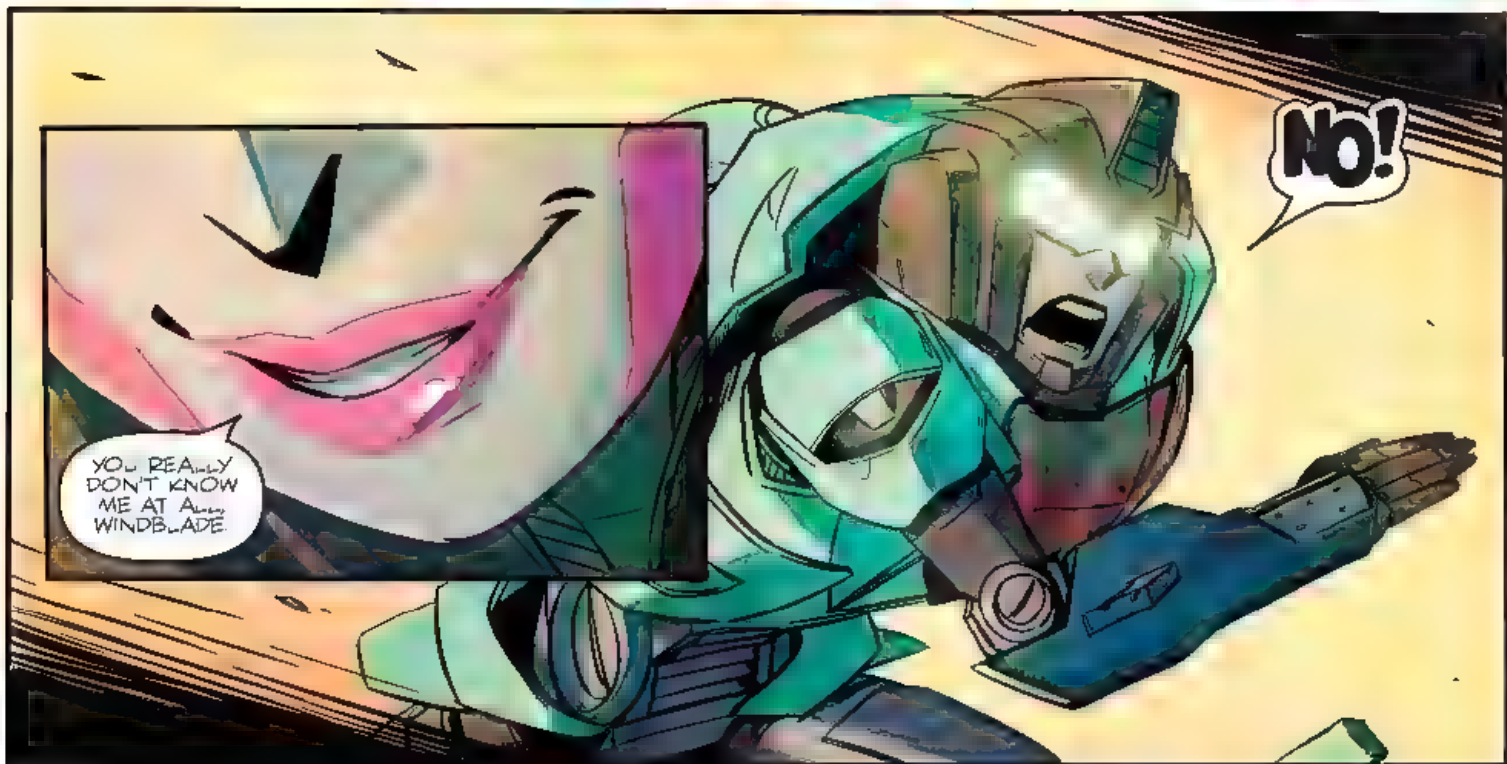
PLEASE, ARCEE THE PEACE OF TWO WORLDS DEPENDS ON THAT ARTIFACT GOING BACK WHERE IT BELONGS.

THEN... THAT'S...

IT'S THE ENIGMA OF COMBINATION.

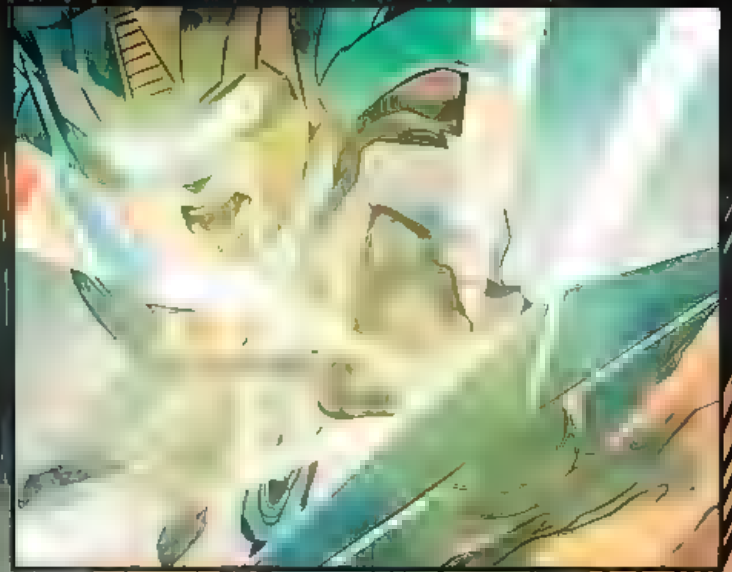
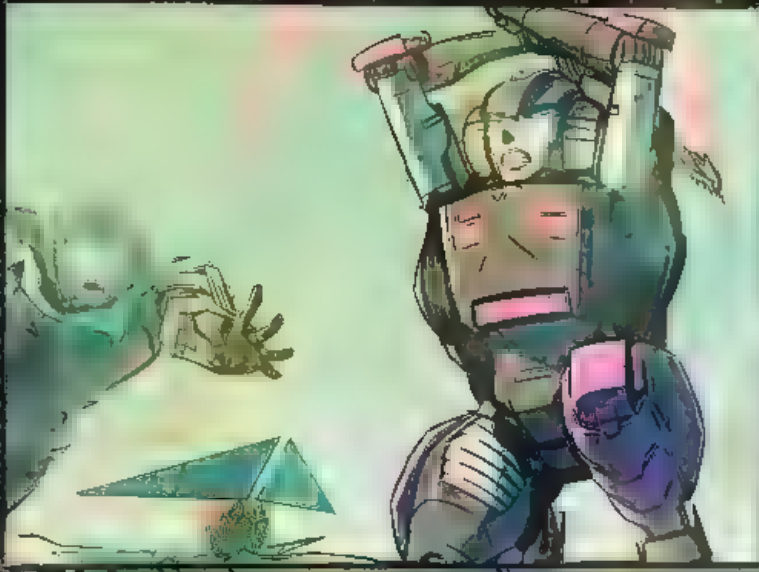
BACK UP—

—NOW!



No!

YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ME AT ALL, WINDBLADE.

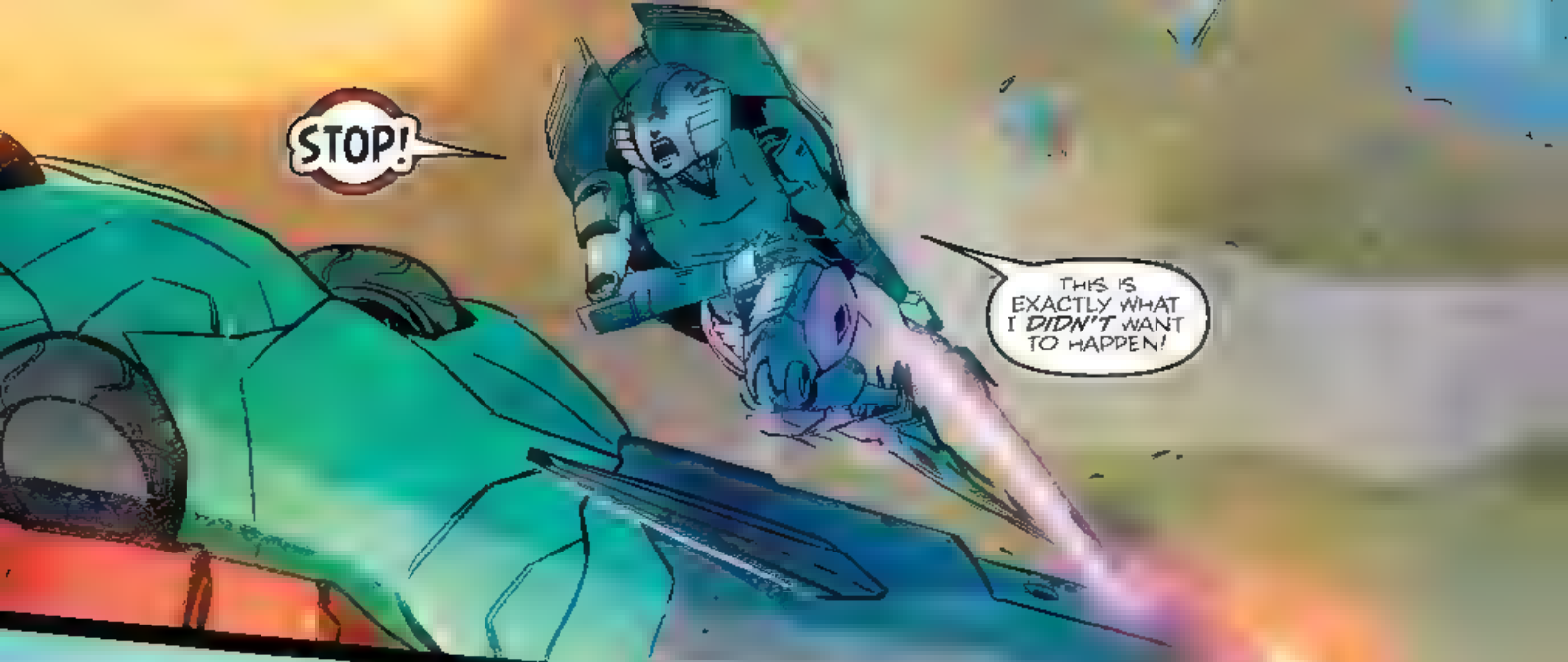




WE—
I—AM

VICTORION!

AND YOU WILL
STEP BACK FROM
THE EN-GMA, OR I
WILL BLAST YOU
TO PIECES.



STOP!

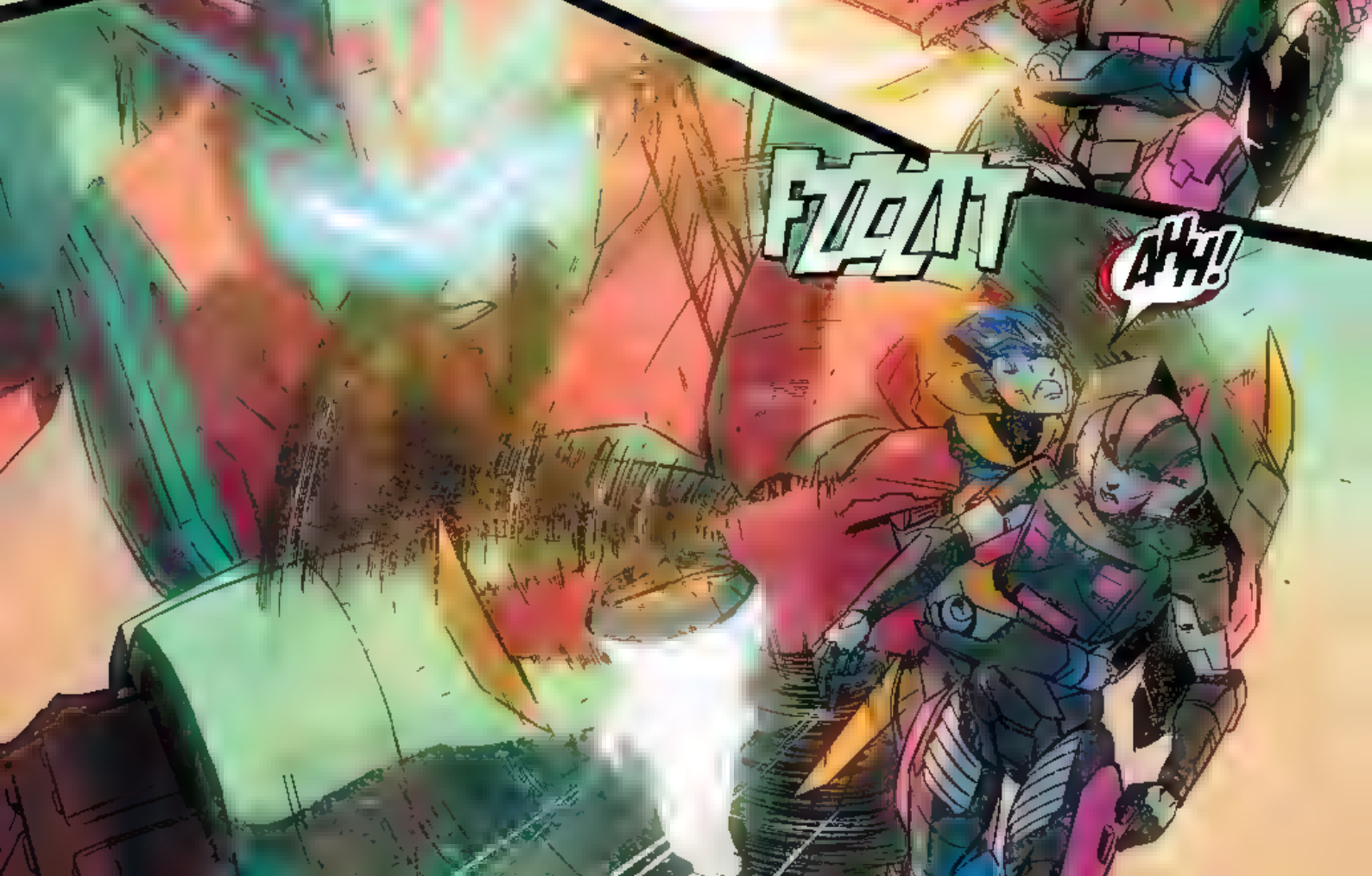
THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I DIDN'T WANT TO HAPPEN!



HOW CAN YOU THREATEN SOMETHING AS SACRED AS THE TREASURE OF A PRIME?!

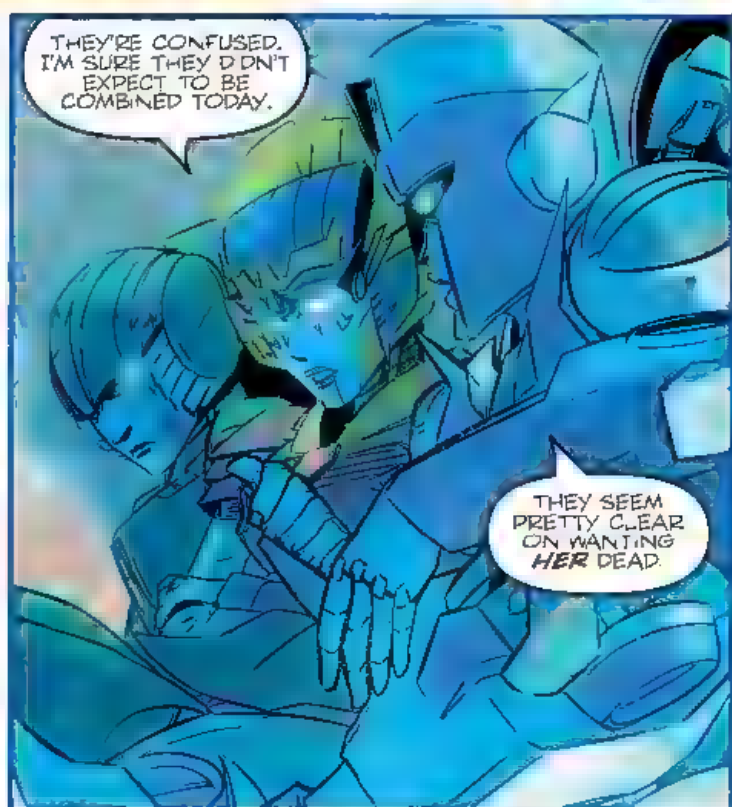
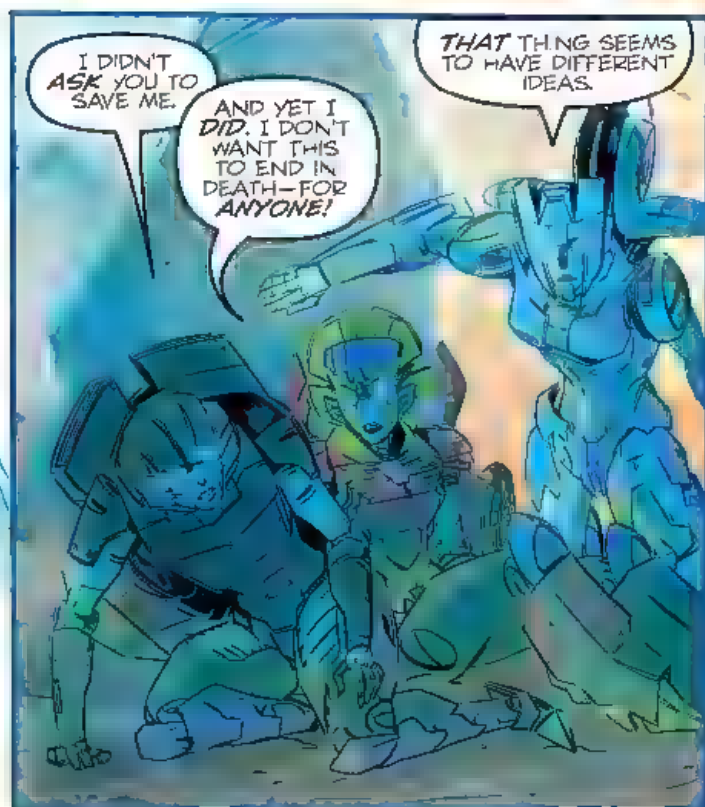
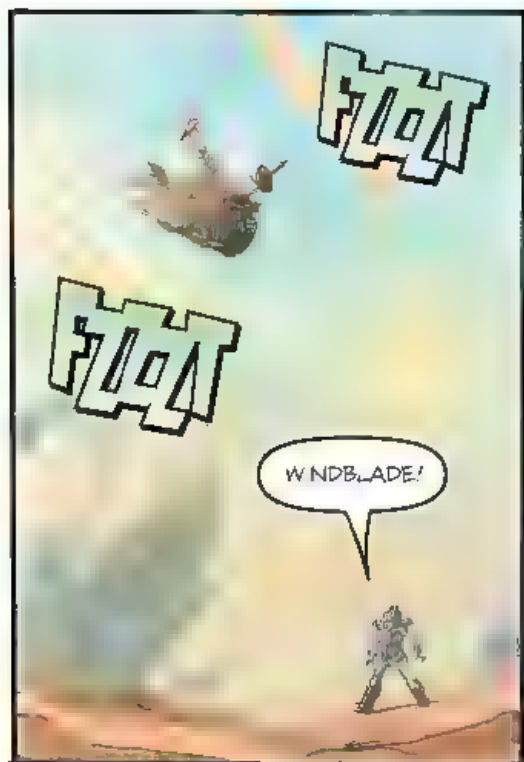
IT'S NOT SO HARD WHEN- ARGH!

OWF! I-I'VE GOT YOU.



FZZT

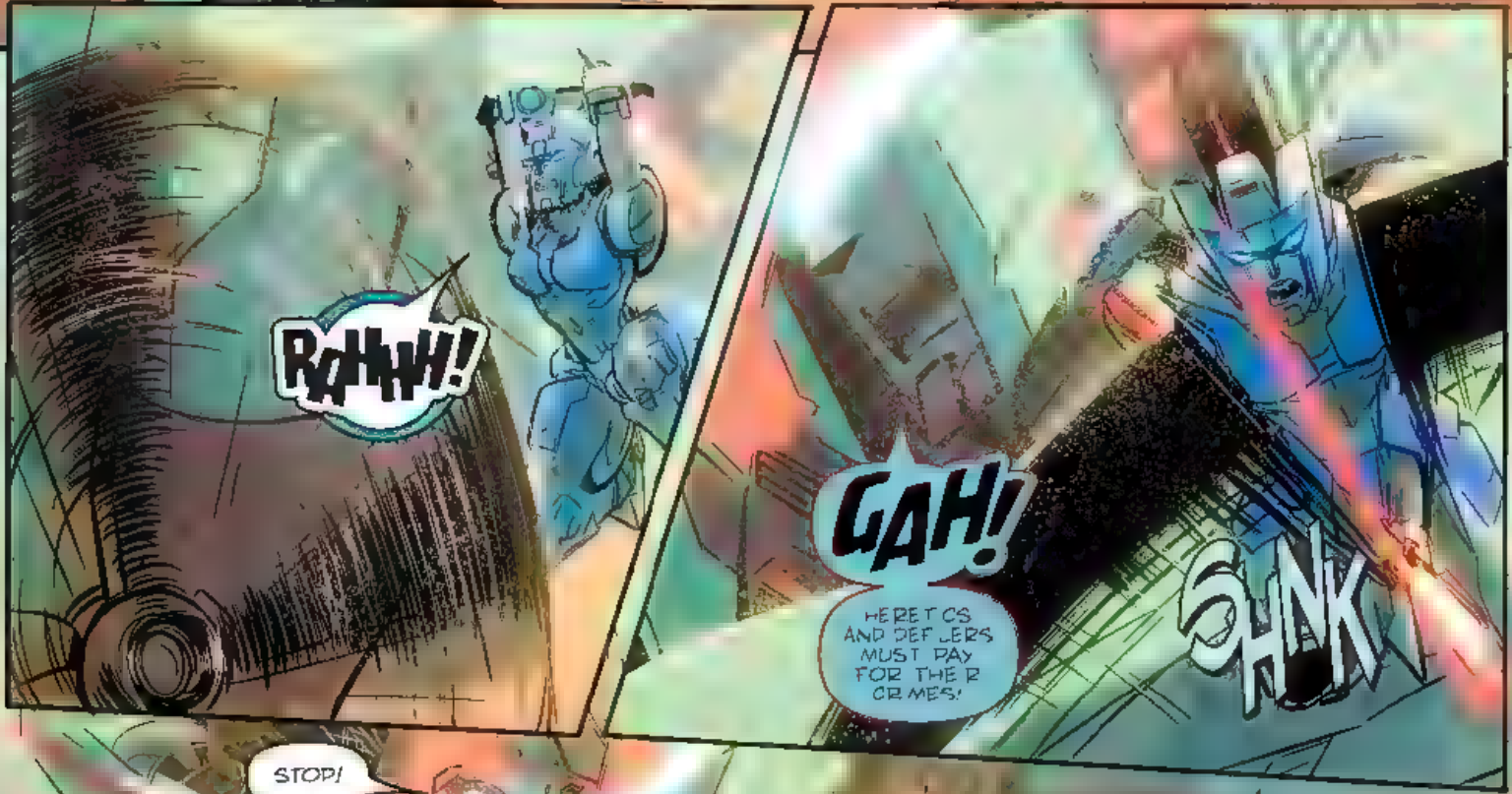
AHH!







OF COURSE
IT GOES
AFTER *ME!*



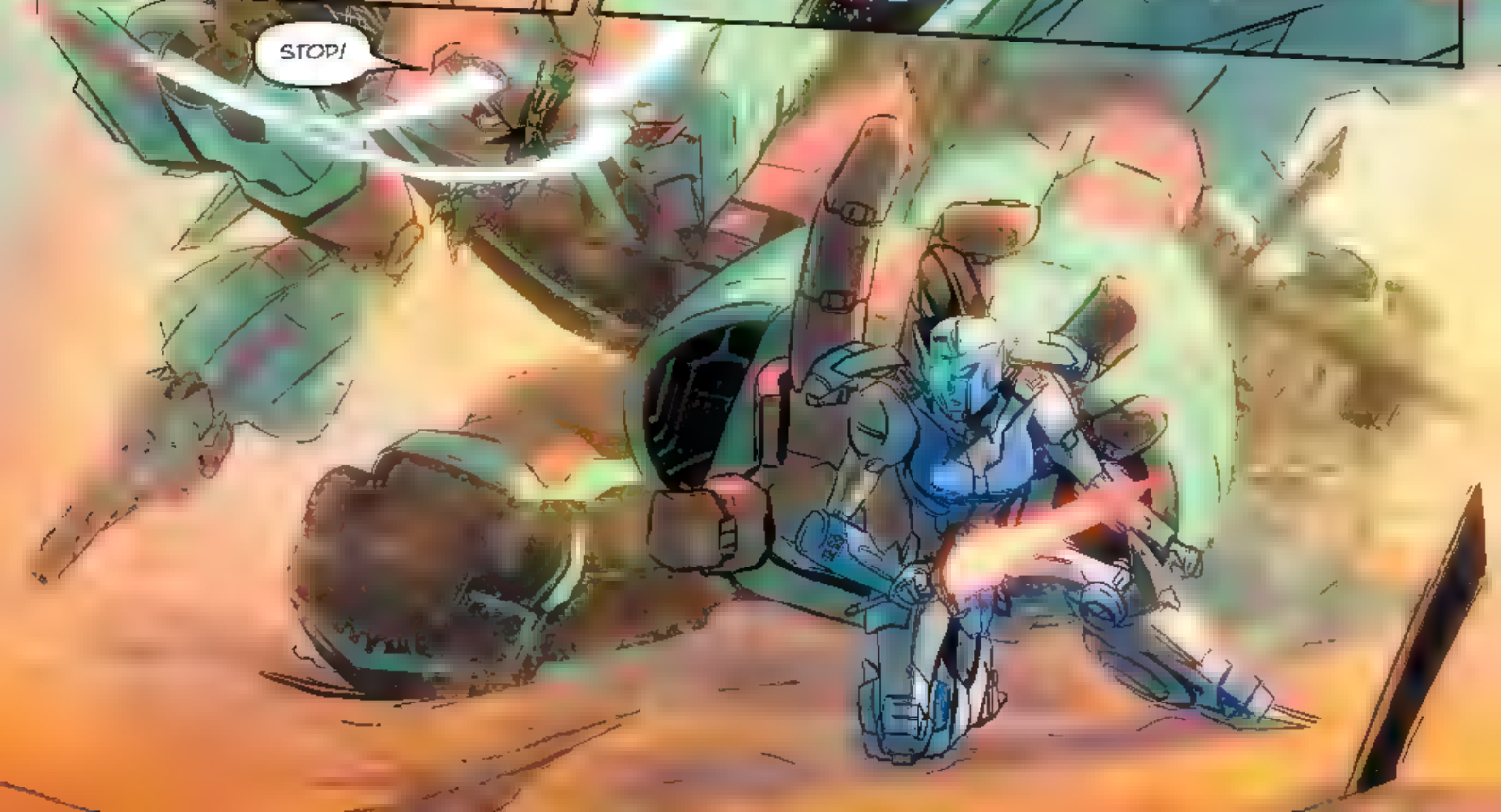
RAHH!

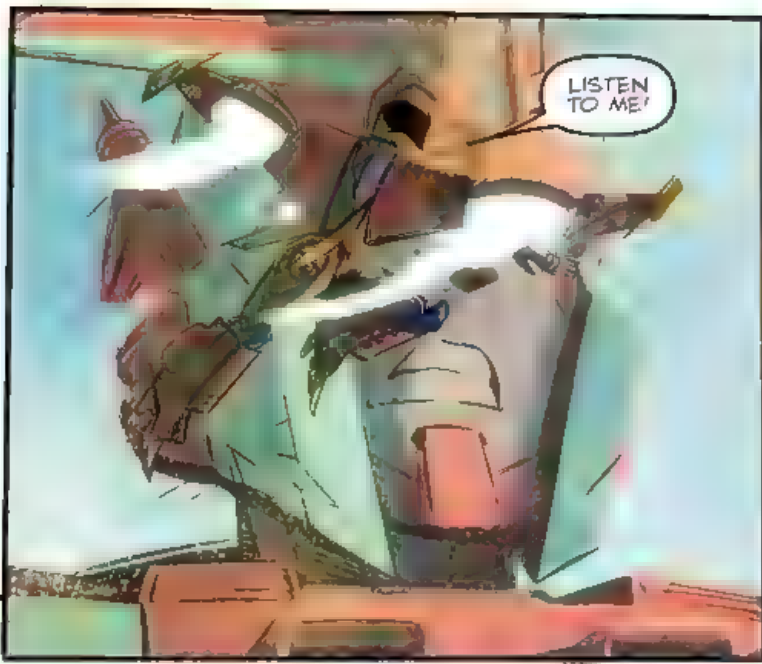
GAH!

HERETICS
AND DEFLECTORS
MUST PAY
FOR THEIR
CRIMES!

SHINK

STOP!





LISTEN TO ME!



YOU'RE TORCHBEARERS, AREN'T YOU?

SERVANTS OF THE MISTRESS OF FLAME?

OF A SORT



A TITAN WAS HERE ONCE AND THE CITY—THE CRYSTAL CITY—WAS SAID TO BE BUILT BY PRIMUS

IF THERE IS ANYTHING OF VALUE LEFT HERE, WE WERE SENT TO FIND IT.

WE WILL PRESERVE THE LEGACY OF THE PRIMES.

THEN START HERE.

PRESERVE SOLUS' LEGACY OF PEACE AND CREATION. SHE WOULD NOT WANT YOU TO DESTROY NEEDLESSLY IN HER NAME.

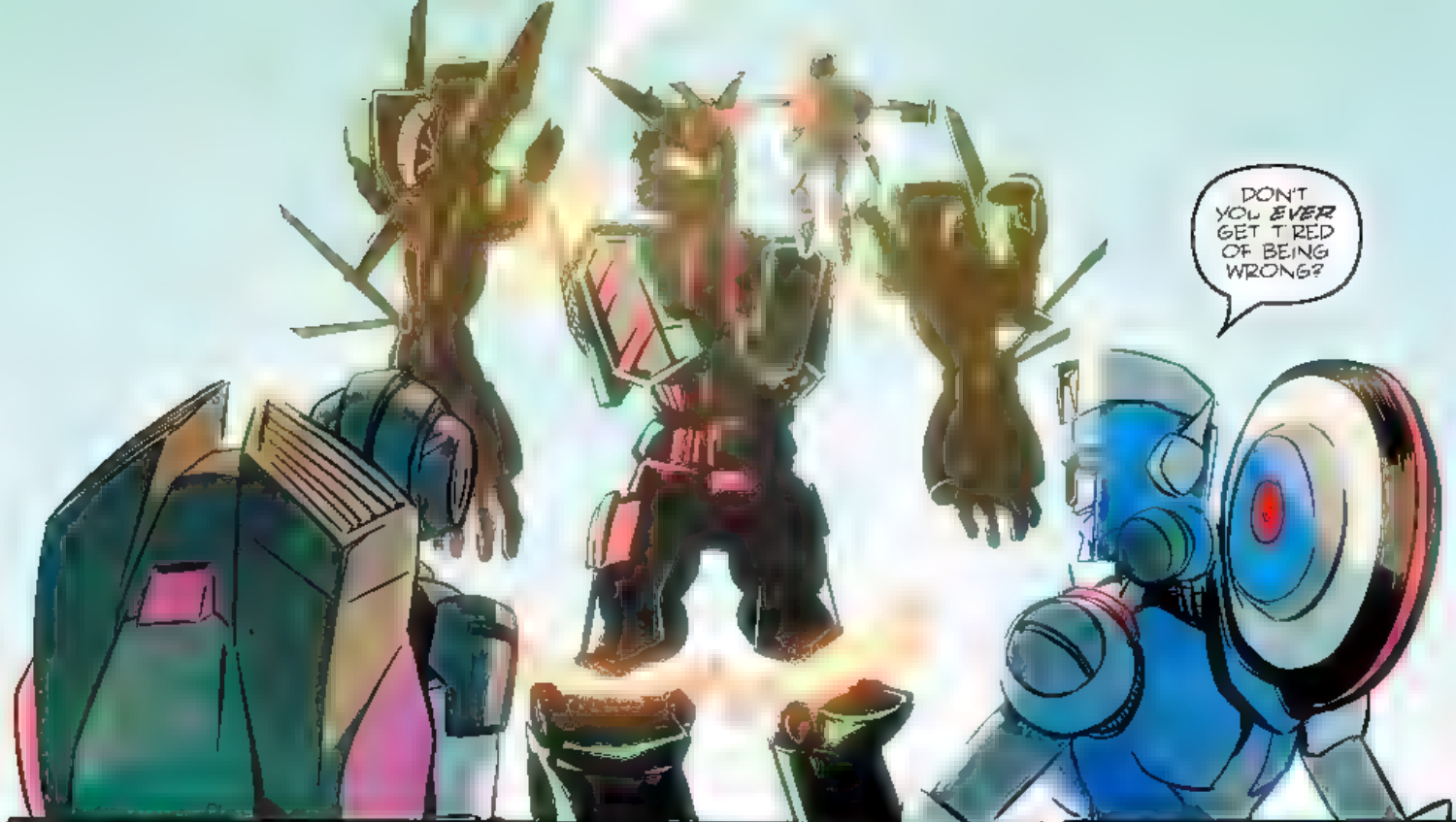


NO WAY SHE TALKS THAT THING DOWN

YOU DON'T KNOW WINDBLADE.



BUT I KNOW MONSTERS.



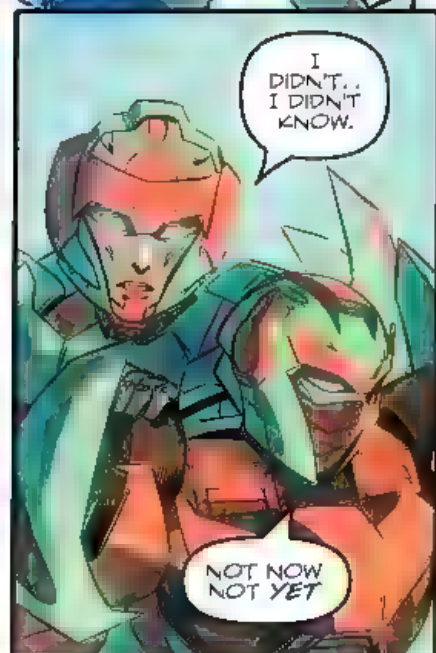
DON'T
YOU *EVER*
GET TRED
OF BEING
WRONG?



I'M SORRY,
CITYSPEAKER.
WE WERE
DISORIENTED

WE WERE
MORE
THAN THAT.
WE WERE—

—UNIFIED.
WE *WERE*
MORE SO.



I
DIDN'T...
I DIDN'T
KNOW.

NOT NOW
NOT YET



IT'S OVER, ARCEE. THE
ENIGMA IS GO NG BACK
WHERE IT BELONGS AND
WE *NEVER* SPEAK OF
THIS INCIDENT AGAIN

YOU TRUST
THEM TO KEEP
THIS SECRET?

I DO

AND MORE
IMPORTANTLY, I
WANT TO TRUST
YOU, NOT TO COME
BACK FOR T.

WHY DO
YOU FEEL SUCH
A NEED TO
DESTROY
SOMETHING SO
PRECIOUS?





NEITHER DO WE. BUT WE **ARE** CHANGED AND WE HAVE AS MUCH RIGHT TO BE WHAT WE **ARE** AS WHAT WE WERE.

AND IF STARScream STARTS FORCING PEOPLE TO COMBINE?

WE WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

PERHAPS IF THE ENIGMA WAS HIDDEN, KEPT SAFE ON CAMINUS...

NO.

STARScream AND **GALVATRON**. THEY WANT US TO STAY SEPARATE.

EXCLUSION IS THE FIRST STEP IN JUSTIFYING WAR.



THAT'S WHY THE ENIGMA HAS TO GO BACK. IT'S WHY WE HAVE TO **EMBRACE** STARScream AS TIGHTLY AS POSSIBLE. IF THERE ARE NO "ABOMINATIONS," THERE IS NOTHING TO GO TO WAR AGAINST.

AND EVERY DAY OF THIS **IMPERFECT PEACE** IS A DAY CYBERTRONIANS CLING TO PEACE A LITTLE TIGHTER.



HOW MANY OF THESE DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS ARE YOU WILLING TO BURY, WINDBLADE?

AS MANY AS I HAVE TO.



HNN. SO YOU'RE NOT THE PERFECT IDEALIST EVERYONE SAYS YOU ARE.

OKAY. I GUESS IF YOU'RE WILLING TO FIGHT A LITTLE DIRTY, I'M WILLING TO HAVE A LITTLE FAITH.

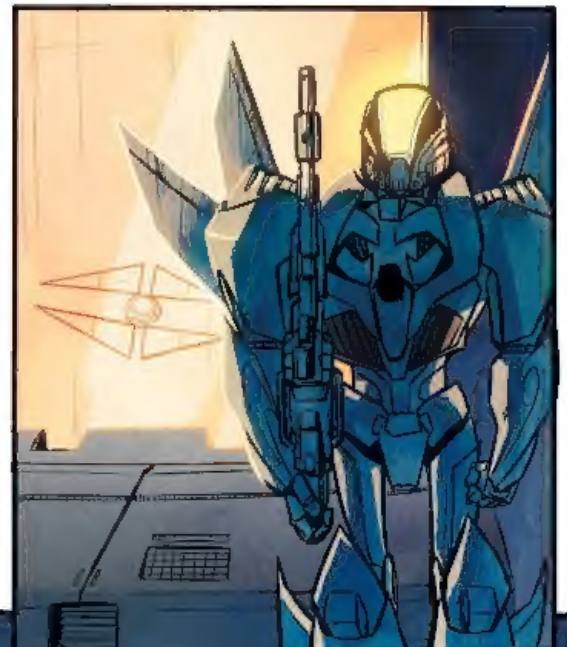
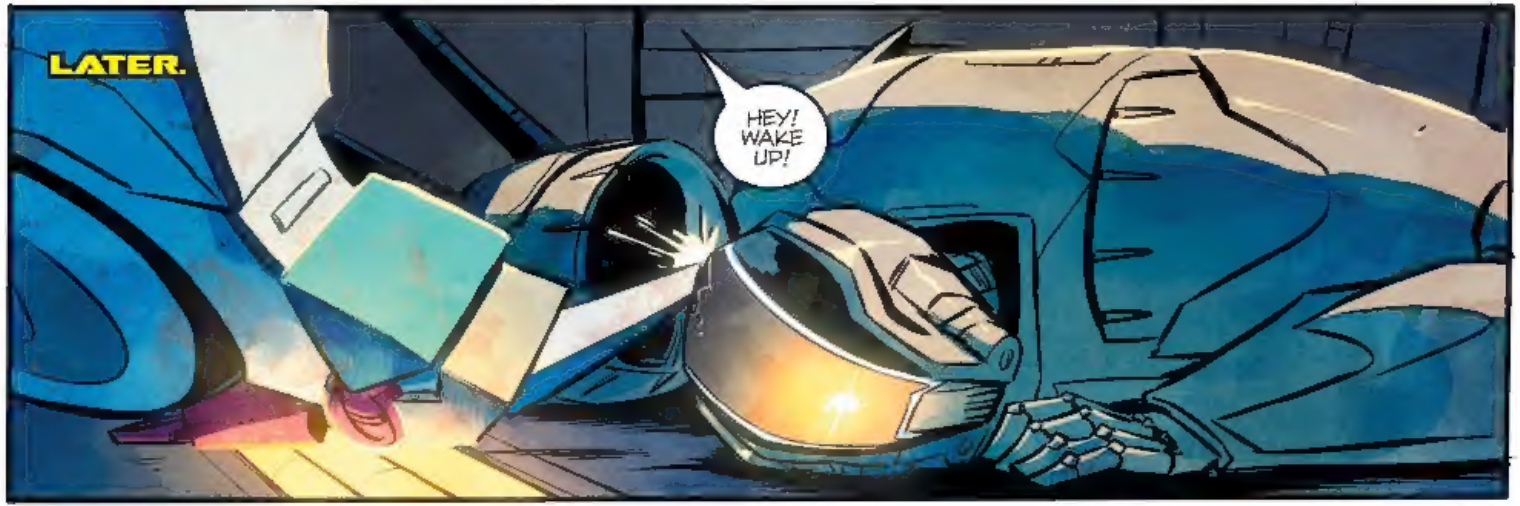


TAKE IT.

BUT IF STARScream DOES START TO BUILD HIS ARMY, I EXPECT YOU... ALL OF YOU... TO SNUFF OUT HIS SPARK.

...

GLADLY.



COMBINER HUNTERS

Welcome to the TRANSFORMERS: COMBINER HUNTERS one-shot! I'm John Barber—I edit (or sometimes write) the TRANSFORMERS comics from IDW Publishing and Hasbro.

Hope you enjoyed this adventure, pitting Windblade, Chromia, and Arcee against the all-new Combiner, Victorion! There's a bit of a history to this comic book, as many of you may know.

A few years ago, Hasbro ran a promotion where fans could build a new TRANSFORMERS character by voting online for specific attributes. The result was Windblade, who made her debut in the comic book saga *Dark Cybertron*. The introduction of Windblade made huge waves among TRANSFORMERS—and comics—fans.

One of the big reasons for the instant excitement about Windblade was the fact she is a woman—and female TRANSFORMERS characters had been woefully underrepresented in the TRANSFORMERS comics. So Windblade ushered in a new era, bringing Chromia (plus another new character, Nautica) along with her, joining Arcee... with many, many more following quickly.

Another big reason for Windblade's rise to popularity in the comics was the quality and success of the first *Windblade* limited series, written by Mairghread Scott and drawn by Sarah Stone. Mairghread had been writing TRANSFORMERS cartoons for some time, and had come aboard to work on some comics, too. I knew she had a particular interest in female TRANSFORMERS, so she was the first person I reached out to, to write the story. Mairghread introduced me to Sarah, and her amazing art turned heads throughout the comics industry!

So, with Windblade a hit—making her way into toys, comics, and TV—Hasbro decided that for their next Fan-Built promotion, they'd have a whole Combiner—which, as I'm sure you've figured out (if you didn't already know), is a giant character built out of multiple regular-sized ones.

This time, the voting was more complex—more characters mean more variables—and in the end, Victorion stood tall!

But before the voting had even opened, Hasbro's Sarah Carroll reached out to me. Sarah—along with Michael Kelly, Hasbro's Senior Director, Global Publishing—is somebody I work with on a day-to-day basis, creating cool connection points between comics and toys. She asked if IDW would be interested in debuting the new Combiner in the comics—specifically, for Comic-Con International: San Diego.

We were in the midst of plotting out a story called *Combiner Wars*, which I was co-writing with Mairghread. We were already neck-deep in Combiners... so, of course we were interested! The added twist would be that these new characters would be introduced in a story highlighting the Combiner Hunters—a Comic-Con Exclusive toy set that included new decos of Windblade, Chromia, and Arcee.

I called up Mairghread to see if she was interested, and she immediately hit upon a story that provided a great jumping-on point for new readers, worked as an epilogue to *Combiner Wars*, and set up some important developments that will play out further in the *Transformers* comic I write.

At the previous year's Comic-Con, I met an artist named Sara Pitre-Durocher. She was working on TRANSFORMERS games and packaging art, and I'd been impressed with her portfolio, so I brought her on to do a few covers for *Combiner Wars*. With this new one-shot taking shape, I thought she'd be a good fit. I emailed her and learned just how right I was: she was already working on some of the packaging art for Victorion! As the pages started to come in, I knew we had something special here—Sara nailed the impressive action and quiet drama with equal skill.

Joining her on colors, thanks to Andrew Hall of Phase6, is a fantastic colorist who goes by Yamaishi. She'd helped us out on the end of *Combiner Wars* and lends a beautiful painterly touch to the Sea of Rust and all our heroes.

So that's how this comic came about. Now—what happens next?

Windblade and Chromia appear every month in *Transformers: Windblade*, written by Mairghread, drawn by Corin Howell, and colored by Thomas Deer. In the fallout from *Combiner Wars*, Cybertron has come into contact with several long-lost colonies—and Windblade is trying to get allies against Starscream, Cybertron's current ruler!

Victorion will next turn up in Arcee's regular home—*Transformers*, written by me and drawn by Andrew Griffith, with colors by Josh Perez (and some guest art by Sara in the not-too-distant future!). Arcee is on Earth, acting as leader of an Autobot team that's up against Galvatron's attempts to restart the Decepticon Empire!

And Nautica—Windblade and Chromia's absent friend—is aboard the starship *Lost Light* in *Transformers: More Than Meets the Eye*, by writer James Roberts, artist Alex Milne, and colorist Joana Lafuente. Rodimus and Megatron (who's an Autobot now) lead a quest to find the Knights of Cybertron, and along the way get into some of the most fan-and-critically-acclaimed stories in the history of TRANSFORMERS comics.

Plus! *Transformers Vs. G.I. Joe* pits two of the best brands in entertainment against each other in a way you'd never imagine, courtesy of the visionary writer-artist Tom Scioli (with me dragging him down a little); and *Transformers Robots in Disguise* debuts this month, featuring the stars of the hit Cartoon Network show going up against their former (?) friends from the fan-favorite *Transformers Prime* show in all-ages fun from writer Georgia Ball and artist Priscilla Tramontano!

All of these comic books are available at your local comic book store (use comicshoplocator.com to find one) or online using the new TRANSFORMERS comics app, available on iOS and Android devices—plus anywhere else comics and books are sold!

So—I've rambled long enough! See you in the funny pages!

John Barber
Senior Editor